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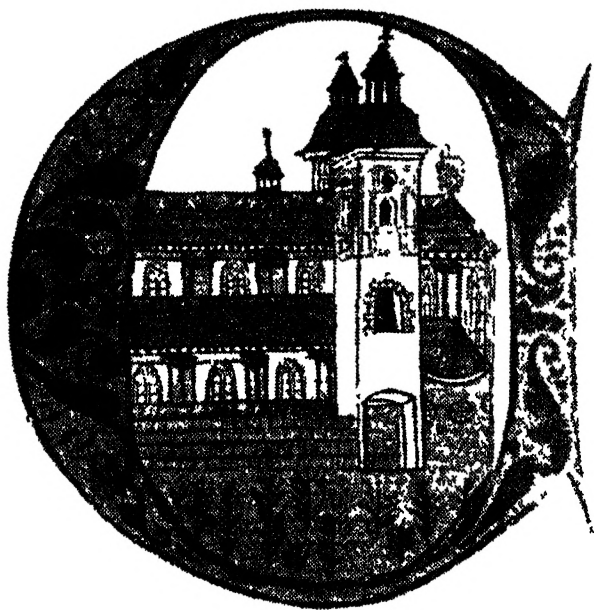
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THE MUSEUM OF CZECH LITERATURE



*Illumination from the Premonstratensian Gradual (1606),
the work of Jan Šticha*

THE MUSEUM
OF CZECH
LITERATURE

by Jaroslav Dvořáček

ORBIS—PRAGUE

1955

Since time immemorial Prague, the capital of Czechoslovakia, has delighted Czechs and Slovaks as well as foreign visitors by the beauty of its ancient cultural and historical monuments. Unforgettable is the view of the left bank of the Vltava, where the cupolas and spires of churches, crowned by the majestic Prague Castle, emerge from the sea of roofs of palaces and burghers' houses. If we look at this panorama from the old Charles bridge, the eye is attracted to a fine piece of baroque architecture with spires rising up out of the green gardens to the left of the castle. This is the former Premonstratensian monastery on Strahov. Within the precincts of the monastery buildings, which have been carefully renovated, the Museum of Czech Literature is today housed.

The renovation of Strahov is one of many proofs of the care devoted by the Czechoslovak Government to historical monuments. Strahov bears proud witness to the nation's glory. A visit to this Museum, opened in 1953, provides the visitor with a complete survey of the development of Czech literature and gives a clear idea of the culture of the nation which has created it.

THE HISTORY OF STRAHOV

Not until 1950, when work was begun on restoring the Strahov monastery, did its full significance become apparent. The remains of a Romanesque monastery were discovered, pointing to the existence of a complex of buildings, which must have been one of the largest in Europe.

The Strahov monastery was founded in 1140 by the Czech prince, Vladislav, on the advice of the Bishop of Olomouc, Jindřich Zdík, for the Premonstratensian reformed order.

The rebuilding of the monastery and church dates back to the 16th and 17th centuries when the severe asceticism of the Romanesque building no longer suited the Order. The monastery buildings were extended, and towards the end of the 17th century this development culminated in the erection of a Hall of Theology and the addition of a beautiful summer refectory designed by the architect Matthew of Burgundy. Towards the end of the 18th century, the library, which was open to the public, was completed by the addition of the Hall of Philosophy.

Strahov has played an important role throughout the course of Czech history. Since its foundation, it

has been one of the focal points of Czech culture and art. At the time of the resistance of the Czech nobility to the house of Hapsburg (from 1618 to 1620), the dean of the chapter, the illuminator Jan Šícha, led a rebellion against the abbot. During the period of the National Awakening, from the middle of the 18th century onwards, Strahov produced a number of patriotic priests, and towards the end of the 18th century the ideas of the French Encyclopedists penetrated into the monastery. It was to the credit of enlightened monks that the Strahov library was restored.

STRAHOV LIBRARY

The history of the library is to a large extent the history of the monastery. The library brought the monastery world fame, and it has been visited by outstanding personalities from all over the world.

The Strahov library delights the eye not only by the harmony of its design and the beauty of its carvings, paintings and sculptures, but also by the variety and number of its books, its rare, beautifully illuminated manuscripts and incunabula from all over the world, as well as other unique treasures. Nor is its history lacking in drama.

A first collection of manuscripts existed as early as the 12th century but was destroyed by fire in 1258. A second collection disappeared during the Hussite period, and a third was plundered by Königsmark, a Swedish general, towards the end of the Thirty Years' War. Treasures from this collection are still to be found in various libraries in Europe.

In the second half of the 17th century, the purchase of the so-called Freisleben Library in Jihlava laid the basis for the present library. Numerous gifts and purchases increased the number of volumes to about 150,000.

The most valuable collection is that of 2,000 manuscripts of particular importance for the study of Czech literature and history. Among the manuscripts, we would mention a volume written on parchment, dating from the year 1220, containing some rare chronicles of the time; a 13th-century codex from the Doksany convent, in which the entire Bible was copied out into a small volume in miniature lettering; the *Pontifical* of Bishop Albert of Šternberk from the 14th century; a Bible dating from the 15th century (the *Schellenberk Bible*) and the magnificent *Louka Missal* dating from the 15th century. The library also contains a collection of manuscripts of old Czech secular writings, including such important literary documents as the *Dalimil Chronicle*. The most outstanding of the manuscripts of foreign origin is the collection known as the *Strahov Evangel* dating from the 9th century, of which the provenance is the Church of St. Martin on the Moselle.

The Strahov Library contains over 1,500 incunabula. The majority of Czech incunabula, from Plzeň, Prague and Vimperk, are kept there. A large number of foreign incunabula were provided by the printers of Mainz, Nuremberg, Cologne, Leipzig, Basle, Venice, etc. They are famous for their typography, illuminations and binding. There are also some of Luther's works and autographs.

Strahov has a very large collection of books from the 15th and 16th centuries. During this time lit-

crary and publishing activities developed rapidly throughout the Czech Lands. Booklets and pamphlets dating from the period of the Thirty Years' War are of particular interest among the 17th-century books preserved here. There are also a large number of philosophical, historical, medical and law books from the 18th and 19th centuries. Rare editions of the works of Rousseau, Voltaire, of Diderot's and d'Alembert's Encyclopedia are also to be found in the library.

The collection of engravings, home and foreign, and of the many rare books collected by generations of book lovers and the various heads of the monastery is equally worthy of note.

During the general renovation of the Strahov buildings, far-reaching alterations were made to the library which had been badly neglected. Stucco work and frescos were restored, furnishings repaired and conserved. The library is being replenished by works from other monastery libraries, and its treasures are gradually being made available to the public.

The Strahov Library, which was built up with love and care mainly by patriotic and enlightened priests, is thus becoming a source of information on our national past and a centre of historical research. The library forms an entity with the Museum of Czech Literature.

THE MUSEUM OF CZECH LITERATURE

The aim of this Museum is to trace the development of Czech writing from the earliest times to the present day. Its purpose is to give a picture of the progressive mission of literature throughout the period of feudal despotism and foreign oppression as well as of its development and mission in liberated Czechoslovakia.

The Museum of Czech Literature differs considerably from the traditional literary museums. The aim of those who created it was to show not only the development of literature, but also to give a picture of the material culture and of the social life which forms its background.

The Museum is divided into three sections: the first traces the development of Czech literature from the beginnings of Slav culture in Bohemia up to the Hussite period, the second the period from the 16th century up to the founding of the National Theatre in the second half of the 19th century, and the third, in condensed form, the development of modern Czech literature up to the present time. The progressive role of Czech literature and its mission in the National Awakening has been deliberately

stressed and emphasis has been placed on the work of scholars and poets who laid the basis for our national culture.

Books, manuscripts and facsimiles form the nucleus of the exhibition, which also includes paintings, drawings, sculptures and engravings by both old and modern masters relating to the various periods of Czech literary development. In order to complete the picture for the visitor and provide precise information, models of buildings, maps and graphs, photographs of stage-settings, etc., have been included. The show-cases contain, among other exhibits, Hussite weapons and specimens of pottery. An old printing shop has been reconstructed here, and occasionally the sound of a rare musical box may attract the attention of the visitor.

The first thing that attracts the visitor's attention on entering the Museum is the relics of Slav culture dating from the 5th century, excavated on the territory of what is today Czechoslovakia. In the 9th century, the Great Moravian Empire developed within roughly the same boundaries as those of present-day Czechoslovakia. In response to a request of its rulers, two Byzantine priests, Cyril and Methodius, were the first to bring Christianity to this country. At that time, the Slav tribes in our country already had a culture of their own (songs, legends, fairytales) which they handed down by word of mouth. Cyril devised the first Slavonic alphabet (the

Glagolic alphabet) in which the earliest documents were written. The route taken by the two brothers, Cyril and Methodius, through the various Slavonic countries, as well as the wanderings of their disciples, who were expelled from Great Moravia by the German princes, are traced in the Museum. Slavonic culture, however, survived in Bohemia. Here we are able to follow the Old Slav legend of the Czech saints Václav (Wenceslas) and Ludmíla, and the development of their cult in the Slav lands.

In the 10th century, the power of the Přemysl family was consolidated in Bohemia, where original literary work began to be produced, and, in 1125, the oldest historical work, the *Kosmas Chronicle*, was written. Sacred songs and prayers provided the foundations for Czech literature. The oldest extant is the hymn, *Lord, Have Mercy on Us!*, dating from the 11th century, and the language of this represents the transition from Old Church Slav to Old Czech. *The St. Wenceslas Chorale* is the oldest Czech hymn that has come down to us.

By the end of the 13th century, Czech had already established itself in literature, proof of which are books of legends, epic tales of chivalry, such as the *Alexandreis*, prose writings (the *Troyan Chronicle*) and most definitely the chronicle in verse called the *Dalimil Chronicle*, whose author gives expression to deep national feeling. An important event in Czech cultural life was the founding of Prague University,

the oldest university in Central Europe, by Charles IV in 1348. This great centre of learning soon acquired importance not only in view of cultural developments, but also in the political and social development of the Czech Lands.

Towards the end of the 14th century many literary works containing criticism of the feudal order began to appear in Bohemia. These tendencies, whose influence extended far beyond the narrow circle of scholars, found best expression in the work of Master JAN Hus. The criticism contained in the sermons which he preached in the Bethlehem Chapel (rebuilt in 1954) was not only levelled at the Church, at that time the most powerful economic and political force in feudal society, but also at social conditions. The books written by Hus were couched in simple language which was very close to spoken Czech. He addressed not only the citizens of Prague, but also the country people for whom he wrote sacred songs. The action of the Council of Constance in 1415 in burning Hus at the stake did not stifle the smouldering anti-feudal revolutionary movement in Bohemia, but, on the contrary, provided the spark which kindled a European conflagration.

The Hussite Age, which is the fount of the democratic and revolutionary traditions of the Czech and Slovak people, is portrayed with the utmost care in the Museum of Czech Literature. On the walls of the rooms are quotations from the works of Jan Hus

besides numerous engravings and facsimiles of pictures from old chronicles. Several maps show us the extent of the Hussite movement in Bohemia and Moravia and its penetration beyond the frontiers of Bohemia. Here we also come across copies of Hussite songs, polemic writings and documents relating to battles fought by Jan Žižka and Prokop the Great. Other documents show the influence of the Hussite Age on later Czech and foreign literature.

This was the period of the first great development of Czech literature. Exhibits of special interest contained in the Museum are documents concerning the Four Prague Articles, a short summary of the Hussite programme, as well as literature of a later period (after 1430), relating to the Basle Covenant, in which were set forth the demands of the Hussites submitted to the Council of Basle on the basis of the Four Articles. The activities of the revolutionary Prague preacher, JAN ŽELIVSKÝ, are called to mind by his *Postilla*, a collection of sermons dating from the year 1419, and JAN ŽIŽKA's talent as an organiser and statesman is clearly shown in his letters and military regulations. *The Net of True Faith* by PETR CHELČICKÝ (1390—1460), which contains a sharp criticism of the social order of the time, has a special place in Hussite literature. Unlike his predecessors, Chelčický tried to find the way to a social co-existence devoid of exploitation by putting into practice the principle of passive resistance.

In the 15th and 16th centuries Czech literature and the publishing of Czech, Latin and translated works made a great advance. The invention of book printing, introduced into Bohemia around the year 1468, was of great significance in that it helped to bring about a wider distribution of Czech books. The first book to be printed in Bohemia was published in Plzeň in 1468. It was the *Troyan Chronicle*, a very popular work at the time. Of the early books printed in Bohemia the majority were Bibles. A fine example of early Czech book production is the *Kutná Hora Bible* (1489), which is to be found in the Museum along with many other early productions of the Czech press. The most famous book publishers of the 16th century were Jiří MELANTRICH and DANIEL ADAM OF VEESLAVÍN. Melantrich's Bible from the year 1577 is richly illustrated. Outstanding among books produced by Daniel Adam of Veleslavín are his dictionaries. Another beautiful book printed in Bohemia in the 16th century is the translation of Münster's *Cosmography* (1554), the perfect craftsmanship of which cannot but attract the visitor and fill him with admiration. At the beginning of the 16th century a Byelorussian physician, Franciscus Skoryna, printed the first Russian books in Prague. Sixteenth-century book decoration is represented by some very fine examples.

The Museum provides a fairly complete picture of the various branches of the literature and science

of the time, including books on travel, music, history, natural science and astronomy.

The most important of the Czech patriotic humanists at that time was VIKTORIN KORNEL OF VŠEHRDY, who, at the beginning of the 16th century, published an important legal work, *The Nine Books*. Various editions of the Czech translation of *The Life of Esop* show how popular the book was with 16th-century readers. Facsimiles of engravings from RVAČOVSKÝ's *Shrovetide*, which provided the incentive for numerous similar works, decorate one of the windows of the room. Here, too, are to be found the love songs and prose writings of HYNEK OF PODĚBRADY, the son of King Jiří of Poděbrady, dating from the close of the fifteenth century. A translation of a story by Boccaccio, published in 1519 under the title of *The Chronicle of Florio and Biancaflora*, is among the exhibits.

The Museum also possesses a fine collection of popular literature, pamphlets, broadsheets, prophecies and the like.

Important for the development of 16th-century Czech literature was the Union of Brethren, which followed the Hussite traditions and the teachings of Chelčický. The members of this Union, the majority of whom were scholars, published scientific works as well as religious writings. The former included books of travel, geographical works and chronicles. Among the works of the members of the Union, those of JAN BLAHOŠLAV (1523 to 1571)

are of great importance. He wrote a book on music (*Musica*), the first grammar of the Czech language based on scientific principles (*Grammatica*), and published his own translation from Greek of the complete *New Testament*. The crowning achievement of the Union of Brethren in the field of literature was the translation of the whole text of the Bible from the original, which came to be known as the *Krállice Bible*. This was printed in six parts during the years 1579—94 in the village of Krállice (Moravia), where the printing shop of the Union had been secretly installed during the period of persecution of non-Catholics in Bohemia. The fact that Czech Protestants use the *Krállice Bible* to this day and that it has been used for hundreds of years by Protestants in Slovakia as well, bears witness to the high language standard of the translation and to the esteem in which it has always been held. Another important document relating to the Union is the *Brethren's Hymn Book*, dating from the year 1576.

The 16th century in Bohemia and Moravia was marked by deep contradictions within the feudal society. The Museum acquaints the visitor with the work of the miners of Kutná Hora, with their songs and prayers, and contains a variety of records relating to their hard work and to the ruthless exploitation of the working people at that time. Other records and memoirs on view in the Museum are an invaluable source of information on the history of the fre-

quent peasant revolts during the 15th and 16th centuries. The struggles between the aristocracy and the burghers and between the nobles and the king, are reflected in legal and historical works.

The Museum devotes considerable space to literature dealing with events fateful for Czech national and state life, such as the rising of the nobility against King Ferdinand II in 1618. This struggle ended with the defeat of the Bohemians Estates at the Battle of the White Mountain near Prague in 1620, owing to their failure to win the support of the masses of the people. The Museum acquaints the visitor with the literary works of the leading Protestant personalities and the writings of their opponents, the tracts and polemics as well as other literary documents of the time. A picture painted after a contemporary engraving, representing the execution in 1621 of the leaders of the rising in the Old Town Square, completes this part of the exhibiton.

The consequences of the 1620 defeat were tragic for the Czech nation. The non-Catholic nobility and scholars were expelled from the country, their property was confiscated and shared out among foreign nobles, and the sovereign rights of the Czech Lands were gradually liquidated. Forced Germanisation squeezed the Czech language out of public life and literature, and German took its place. The village poor were ruthlessly oppressed, and the rights of many towns were curtailed.

A special room in the Museum is devoted to writers who had to leave the country during that period. A large picture by Václav Brožík shows us one of the greatest men in the history of Czech culture, JAN AMOS KOMENSKÝ (Comenius, 1592—1670). A reproduction of Rembrandt's portrait of an Unknown Old Man, which is thought to be a portrait of Comenius, hangs in the hall. The work of Comenius, the last bishop of the Union of Brethren, points to the future in several directions. His many and diverse works are on display in the exhibition cases. They include dictionaries and encyclopedic works: *Ianua Linguarum* (The Gateway of Languages) and *Orbis Pictus* (The World in Pictures) which are his most widely read books and which have been published many times in a number of languages, the allegory called *The Labyrinth of the World and the Paradise of the Heart* (published in Lissa in Poland in 1631), his philosophical and pansophical works (*Pansophia*), and finally, his works on education. Comenius, as the pioneer of the unified school system and of the inductive method of education by means of object lessons, of education for girls and pre-school education, is undoubtedly the founder of modern educational science. Interesting, too, is the complete edition of his pedagogic writings (*Opera didactica omnia*, Amsterdam, 1657), various editions of the *Didactica* in several translations and other books. His booklet entitled *Angelus Pacis*, addressed to the dele-

gates attending the peace conference in Breda (1667), recalls Comenius's life-long striving for world peace. Among other interesting exhibits, special mention should be made of his *Map of Moravia* and the Moscow edition of *Orbis Pictus* in five languages (1768), as well as of documents concerning his stay in Poland, Hungary, Sweden, England and Holland.

Among other works by Czech exiles mention should be made at least of *Respublica Bohemiae* by PAVEL STRÁNSKÝ, which was published in Leyden (1634) and was republished many times, and of an *Ecclesiastical History* by PAVEL SKÁLA OF ZHOŘ, which takes the reader up to 1623.

At the end of the Thirty Years' War (1618—1648), which laid waste both town and countryside and brought hunger and epidemics in its wake, the population of Bohemia and Moravia was found to have been depleted by two-thirds. The cruel economic oppression of the people went hand in hand with the suppression of all national and cultural life by a foreign aristocracy which aimed at reconverting the population to Catholicism by force. The educational system degenerated, strict censorship was introduced and every attempt was made to delete from the minds of the people all thoughts of their national past, particularly of the Hussite period. Books printed by exiles abroad penetrated but rarely into Bohemia. Nevertheless the national consciousness did not die out in the oppressed masses of the country-

side even after centuries, whereas the urban intelligentsia and the aristocracy became almost completely Germanised. Czech culture was at that time represented mainly by folk songs, fairytales and legends, all permeated by the spirit of revolt against the arbitrary rule of the oppressors. Popular tradition created its own heroes—outlaws who lived in the mountains and forests and upheld the rights of the oppressed. In the period following the Battle of the White Mountain and in the 18th century, Bohemia and Moravia were the scene of large-scale peasant risings, whose leaders were commemorated as heroes by the common people in their legends and in other expressions of folk art (paintings on glass, pottery, wood-carvings and embroidery). In their attempts to revive national life and culture, Czech patriots took the existing folk culture as their starting point.

In the second half of the eighteenth century conditions for the development of Czech culture improved for, at that time, feudalism in the Czech Lands had begun to disintegrate as a result of the development of production forces, and the movement which came to be known as the National Awakening commenced. Joseph II, Emperor of Austria, issued a decree abolishing serfdom and ensuring religious toleration. V. M. KRAMERIUS (1753—1808) began to publish Czech news-sheets and books for entertainment and learning. The Czech theatre, too, which contributed considerably to the National

Awakening, came to life. Of particular importance was the Czech theatre in Prague, the chief playwright of which was VÁCLAV THÁM (1765—1816), and the folk puppet theatre of MATĚJ KOPECKÝ (1762—1847), whose puppets are exhibited in the Museum. Several *Writings in Defence of the Czech language* appeared, first in Latin (BOHUSLAV BALBÍN, 1621—88) and later in Czech (K. H. THÁM). The Museum contains a large number of Czech books intended to develop and strengthen national consciousness.

The influence of the enlightened scholar, JOSEF DOBROVSKÝ (1753—1829), on the National Awakening was outstanding, even though he wrote in German and in Latin. He laid the foundations of Czech historical science, of Slavonic philology (*Institutiones linguae slavicae dialecti veteris*—The Foundations of Old Slav), and of research into the Czech language. Indeed it may be said that Dobrovský, with his shrewd and discerning mind, laid the foundations of Czech modern science in general. His younger successor, the philologist JOSEF JUNGSMANN (1773—1847), wrote in Czech and did everything possible to enrich the vocabulary of the Czech language to meet the needs of contemporary production developments, science and literature. He made a catalogue of Czech literary documents from the earliest times to his day and assembled the entire wealth of old and modern Czech vocabulary in a *Czech-German*

Dictionary. His pioneer translations of the masterpieces of world literature contributed considerably to the refinement of Czech verse.

In the adjoining room, a number of works by Czech painters and sculptors of the 19th century attract the visitor's attention. These were inspired by the *Dvůr Králové* and *Želéná Hora Manuscripts*, allegedly dating from the 9th and 13th centuries. Although Dobrovský had already expressed his doubts as to the genuineness of the manuscripts, and, towards the end of the nineteenth century, scientific research proved beyond doubt that they were forgeries, their influence on the awakening of the national consciousness was considerable. The aim of these manuscripts was to show in poetic form the maturity of Czech culture in the period of early feudalism.

The Museum traces the beginnings of scholarly work done in the fields of literature, geography and natural science, which centred round the Museum of the Kingdom of Bohemia (founded in 1818) and the publishing society connected with it (*The Czech Matica, The Journal of the Czech Museum*).

In another room we are introduced to the works of two of the outstanding Czech poets of the first half of the 19th century, FRANTIŠEK LADISLAV ČELAKOVSKÝ (1799—1852) and JAN KOLLÁR (1793—1852). From his early youth F. L. Čelakovský was a collector of various forms of folk poetry, mainly of

folk songs, and from these he drew inspiration for his volume of verse called *Echoes of Czech Songs*, which has maintained its popularity with Czech readers to this day, as the constant demand for new editions proves. Great attention was paid by Čelakovský to the folk-lore of other countries, particularly to Russian folk poetry. Čelakovský voiced his love for the Russian nation in his *Echoes of Russian Songs*. Jan Kollár became the bard of Slav brotherhood in his earliest poems, which he published under the title of *The Daughter of the Slavs*, the first edition of which was printed at Buda in 1824. In his works he presented a programme based on humanist principles for the cultural and political co-operation of all Slavs.

During the same period the foundations were being laid for an overall conception of Czech national history. This was done by FRANTIŠEK PALACKÝ (1798—1876) in his comprehensive *History of the Czech Nation in Bohemia and Moravia*, which takes the reader up to the year 1526. Palacký laid stress above all on the Hussite period, in which he saw the culmination of the nation's democratic and revolutionary traditions. *The History of the Czech Nation* was the greatest work of scholarship produced during the period of the Czech National Awakening, a work on which many later historians and novelists based their interpretation of Czech history.

PAVEL JOSEF ŠAFAŘÍK (1795—1861) made Slav history, language and literature his life-long study.

In his greatest work, called *Slav Antiquity* (1837), he showed the contribution made by the Slavs to the development of European culture.

Nor does the Museum neglect the Czech natural science of that time, whose outstanding representative, JAN EVANGELISTA PURKYNĚ (1787—1869), the pioneer of the cell theory, was a physiologist of world renown. JAN SVATOPLUK PRESL (1791—1849) was the editor of the first scientific journal to appear in Czech. Both these scientists laid the foundations for Czech natural science and technology.

The development of national, social and literary life in the thirties and forties of the nineteenth century is also traced in detail. The first Czech literary periodicals, such as *Flowers*, edited by J. K. Tyl, are on view here. Pictures representing contemporary stage-settings, portraits of actors, theatre programmes, many pictorial documents relating to social celebrations, public meetings and a map of Prague with cultural centres marked on it, show the rapid development of the activities of enlightened patriots in town and country. At that time (1834), the composer FRANTIŠEK ŠKROUP wrote the music to the song *Where is My Home?*, which soon became popular and, in 1918, after the foundation of an independent Czechoslovak State, was made the Czechoslovak national anthem. In Brno in 1848, FRANTIŠEK KLÁCEL published his *Letters from a Friend to a Friend on the Origin of Socialism and Communism*.

The great Czech poet, KAREL HYNEK MÁCHA (1810—1836), also belongs to this period. Mácha's best known work, his romantic poem *May*, is not only remarkable for the beauty and music of its language, but is superb in its depth of feeling for nature and love of country. Some of the nineteen translations of this poem are exhibited in the Museum. Other exhibits include Mácha's prose writings and notes on his journeys at home and abroad, as well as sketches and extracts from his diary.

The beginnings of Czech drama are linked with the name of Mácha's contemporary, JOSEF KAJETÁN TYL (1808—1856). Tyl became a classic of the Czech theatre by such works as *Jan Hus*, *The Kutná Hora Miners*, *The Bagpiper of Strakonice*, and many other plays. An engraving depicting the Estates Theatre, today the Tyl Theatre, in Prague and pictures of other Czech theatres have a bearing on Tyl's activities as actor and organiser of Czech national life. He was persecuted by the reactionary government after the defeat of the revolution in 1848 and ended his life in misery as a strolling player. Scenes from modern productions of Tyl's plays show how topical they are. His work as a story-writer is also well documented in the Museum.

Tyl's predecessor, VÁCLAV KLIMENT KLICPERA (1792—1859), is represented by several editions of his comedies, such as *The Magic Hat*, *Hadrián of Římsy*, etc.

In the year 1848, to which a further room is devoted, the Czech people entered the political arena, weapons in hand. The wave of democratic, anti-absolutist revolution, which engulfed all Europe, also had its repercussions in the Czech Lands. The weapons with which students, craftsmen and workers fought on the barricades in Prague, and the banners that they carried, are exhibited in the Museum. The rising, betrayed by the bourgeoisie, was drowned in blood but the year 1848 left deep impressions on the minds and on the works of the great thinkers of the time. One of the leaders of the struggle, the poet J. V. FRIČ (1829—90), carried on the fight against the monarchy from abroad, and the writer, KAREL SABINA (1813—1877), established contact with the working class during the revolution. The Museum also shows the echo which the events of the year 1848 found in the works of the later authors.

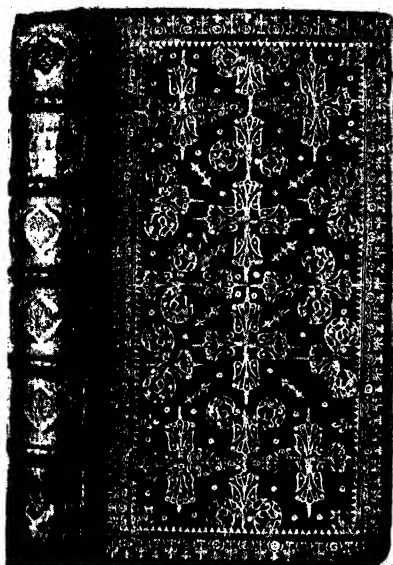
A sculpture by Bohumil Kafka representing a great fighter for the national cause, Karel Havlíček, can be seen in the next room. KAREL HAVLÍČEK (1821—56) was a journalist, politician and satirical poet. He became the darling of the Czech people as a result of his courageous stand against, and his sharp criticism of, the absolutist reactionary regime, at whose head stood the notorious Alexander Bach (up to 1859). Although Havlíček did not join the radical and democratic forces in 1848, he fought uncompromisingly and determinedly against the sup-

pression of the democratic and national rights of the Czech people. He was deported to Brixen in the Tyrol by order of the Austrian Government, whence he returned with failing health and died shortly afterwards. The exhibits give us a clear picture of Havlíček's youth and of his journey to Russia, where he became aware of the rottenness of the tsarist regime, and this he exposed in his *Pictures of Russia*. But he came to love the Russian people and progressive Russian literature, particularly the great realistic works of Gogol, which he translated into Czech. Havlíček was a militant journalist. Copies of the *Prague Newspaper*, *The National Newspaper* and *The Slav*, all of which he edited, are exhibited in the Museum along with many editions of his books of verse. *King Ládra*, *The Baptism of St. Vladimtr* and *The Tyrol Elegies* are caustic satires aimed against the survivals of feudalism, the Church hierarchy and Austrian bureaucracy. Many illustrations accompany Havlíček's poignant epigrams levelled at obscurantism, the absolutism of the Catholic Church and the Austrian monarchy.

¶ In one of the beautiful rooms on the southern side of Strahov are exhibits relating to the life and work of the great Czech woman writer, BOŽENA NĚMCOVÁ (1820—62). Her best known book, *Grandmother*, was written at a time when national oppression had reached its climax and when the authoress experienced deep personal grief. Yet it is a happy,



*The Strahov "Court of Paradise" with Romanesque ambits
and fountain in the centre*



*Specimen of original bindings in the Hall of Philosophy
(Conseils de la sagesse, Paris 1678)*



The Jan Hus Hall with a sculpture of Hus and a model of the Bethlehem Chapel, where Hus preached to the people of Prague. The hall is in the freshly excavated part of Strahov with remains of Romanesque vaulting

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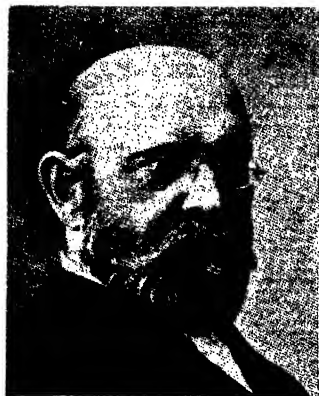
Model of an old printing shop in the Museum



*The renovated Hall of Philosophy in the Library. (End of the 18th century.)
Ceiling frescos by Antonin Maulbertsch, bookcases by Lahofer*



*The last hall of the Museum with Karel Pokorný's statue Brotherhood.
This hall is a former summer refectory with frescos by Siard-Nosecký*



Božena Němcová

Alois Jirásek

Jan Amos Komenský (Comenius)

Jan Neruda



Ivan Olbracht

Karel Čapek

Marie Majerová



*The President of the Czechoslovak Republic, Antonín Zápotocký,
accompanied by Zdeněk Fierlinger, left, Chairman of the National Assembly,
in the Božena Němcová Hall of the Museum*

sunny book, for which Němcová drew on her memories of her childhood which she spent in a delightful part of north-eastern Bohemia. The central figure of the novel is the grandmother, an embodiment of all the good qualities that Němcová recognised in the common people, in their attitude to life, in their wisdom and patriotism. *Grandmother* is, to this day, one of the best loved and most widely read Czech books.

Sculptures, period drawings, photographs and manuscripts complete the picture of Němcová's work which includes tales, Czech and Slovak fairytales and poems. The letters which she wrote to her friends and acquaintances reveal the fate of a woman fighting for social justice and vainly longing for understanding and warm human feeling. Czech poets, literary critics and historians, as well as painters and sculptors, have been attracted by the great personality of Božena Němcová, and have paid tribute to her in their works.

The following room is dedicated to another poet of that time, KAREL JAROMÍR ERBEN (1811—70). His best known book is a volume of ballads which Erben published under the title of *Nosegay* and on which he had worked for nearly thirty years whilst continuing his work as a collector of folk tales and songs. *Nosegay* is the fruit of his intimate knowledge of folk poetry, and is one of the gems of Czech literature in its sincerity, optimism and faith in true jus-

tice. The beauty of these ballads inspired many of our composers. Thus, for instance, Dvořák composed the charming symphonic poems *The Water-sprite*, *The Noonday Witch*, *The Golden Spinning Wheel*, *The Wild Dove* and a cantata *The Spectre's Bride*, in which he expressed the deep emotions aroused in him by Erben's ballads. Fibich wrote a melodrama to words by Erben, called *Christmas Eve*. Repeated editions of *Nosegay* and of the *Fairytales* are proof of the unfading beauty and undiminishing popularity of Erben's works.

Czech national life began to develop fully and Czech literature began to blossom forth in the eighteen-sixties, a time when the Austrian Emperor, under the pressure of revolutionary forces, granted a Constitution, and when, as a result of growing democratic tendencies, more favourable conditions were created for the development of Czech culture. The exhibits from this period include copies of newspapers, literary and scientific works (such as *Rieger's Encyclopedia*), documents relating to the founding of economic, physical-training and art societies, such as the *Sokol*, the *Art Club* and others. Huge demonstrations and celebrations were held in many parts of the country. In 1866 the Interim Theatre was opened in Prague and the strains of Smetana's opera *The Bartered Bride* rang out for the first time under its roof. A picture from the year 1864 by the painter Karel Purkyně of the ceremonial procession held

during the great Shakespeare celebrations is a document showing the love of the Czech people for the great classic of English literature. This was a period which reached its climax with the laying of the foundation stone for the National Theatre in Prague in 1868.

In the fifties a new generation of Czech writers had begun to come forward. The best Czech writers, old and young, contributed to the anthology *May* (first published in 1858). They were united by loyalty to the ideals of the year 1848 and to the best traditions of Czech literature, symbolised by the title of Mácha's immortal poem.

A sculpture by Karel Dvořák representing the most outstanding personality of that generation, Jan Neruda, welcomes the visitor in the next room. JAN NERUDA (1834—91) was one of the greatest Czech writers, poets, critics and journalists. The room is decorated with many engravings and pictures of Prague from the middle of the 19th century. Neruda, who was born and reared in Prague, and spent his life among the ordinary people, captured the very essence of Prague life and the appearance of the city in his many stories, newspaper articles and poems. What is perhaps the most popular of his writings in prose, *Tales from the Malá Strana*, was born of his love for the people and his hatred of social injustice. In his volumes of poems—*Cosmic Songs*, *Simple Themes*, *Ballads and Romances*, *Friday Songs*—Neruda revealed

his deep sensitivity, his progressive ideas and the patriotism of a man who firmly believed in the future of his nation. His democratic and revolutionary ideas are seen at their best in the *Calendar of Humanity*, in which he paid tribute to such men as Garibaldi, Victor Hugo, Vereshchagin, Heine, Petöfi, Björnson and others. Neruda believed that the mission of art is to be a weapon in the fight for progress. He laid stress on realism in art and mastery of form.

Penetrating and fascinating, too, are his travel sketches. He won the love of his readers by his newspaper articles and stories, humorous and satirical. The article in which he greeted the May-Day demonstration of the Prague workers in 1890 is proof of his ability to assess the importance of the working class in the development of society.

Neruda's contemporary and fellow-fighter, VĚTĚSLAV HÁLEK (1835—74), poured out his praise of nature, love, and freedom in his melodious poems. He fought for the emancipation of the people from the fetters of economic exploitation and prejudice. These ideas gained him the love of his numerous readers. His *Evening Songs* (1858), of which many were set to music by Smetana and Dvořák, were dear to a whole generation. Well known to the public are also his realistic pictures of country-life which reflect the growth of class antagonisms in the village as capitalism developed, and in which Hálek portrayed the various types of country people.

It was from the district below the Ještěd mountains in northern Bohemia that KAROLINA SVĚTLÁ (1830—99), who came of a Prague middle-class family, drew her themes for her village tales and novels. Most of her characters are morally sound people whom she depicts as a source of national strength. In those of her books in which Světlá takes as her theme the national past, particularly the time of the National Awakening (*Memories, At Dawn*), she stands on the side of progress. Her efforts to improve educational facilities for women and their social position are also well documented in the Museum.

In 1878 the Czech Social Democratic Party was founded. At that time the working class had the sympathy of outstanding authors, many of whom wrote about the working-class movement.

JAKUB ARBES (1840—1914), an original writer and militant publicist, followed the development of the working-class movement in his prose works, some of which contain very realistic descriptions of the life of the workers and their struggle. He was a historian of the 1848 revolution and fought for the full recognition of Mácha and Neruda. He also wrote short stories on fantastic themes, for which the results achieved by contemporary science provided the inspiration.

The books of ANTAL STAŠEK (1843—1931) also have a pronounced social bias. The theme of his

novels is the suffering of the north Bohemian weavers who sought consolation in spiritualism (*The Visionaries of Our Mountains*). He portrayed the working-class movement, then in its infancy, in *Dark Currents*. In *The Cobbler Matouš*, Stašek gave a realistic picture of the echo which the revolutionary events of 1848 found among the country people.

Further show-cases acquaint the visitor with the work of poets from the ranks of the working class, published in journals or in modest booklets. The most talented of them were FRANTIŠEK CHLÁDEK, JOSEF BOLESLAV PECKA and LADISLAV ZÁPOTOCKÝ, the father of Antonín Zápotocký, President of the Czechoslovak Republic. ANTONÍN ZÁPOTOCKÝ (born 1884), depicted his father's revolutionary activities in his novel *New Fighters Will Arise*, a work of outstanding artistic merit.

The comprehensive, well-documented and detailed survey of the progressive traditions in Czech literature is continued by an exhibition devoted to a great event in Czech national life, the building of the National Theatre in Prague. Right from the time of its foundation, the National Theatre became the rallying point of national culture and the symbol of the struggle of the Czech nation for its sovereign rights. Representatives of Czech political and cultural life fought for the implementation of the idea of building a great National Theatre for the

Czechs, an idea outlined by J. K. Tyl as early as 1848. These strivings ended in success. Numerous pictures on view in the Museum show the laying of the foundation stone in 1868, and there are many documents illustrating the enthusiasm of the people who raised the funds for the building of the Theatre by voluntary contributions and nation-wide collections. Pictures and copies of newspapers show the inauguration in 1881 of the National Theatre with a performance of Smetana's opera *Libuše*. The same year the National Theatre was utterly destroyed by fire, but, thanks to the selfless devotion of the Czech people, who again provided the means for its rebuilding, it was opened for the second time in 1883.

A number of paintings and designs for the decoration of the theatre by Mikoláš Aleš, Vojtěch Hynais and František Ženíšek, adorn the walls of the room. The exhibition ends with a beautifully executed model of the theatre buildings.

The erection of the National Theatre was the last great achievement in the 19th century in which all sections of the nation took part. Towards the end of the century, however, the bourgeoisie began to fall away more and more openly from the democratic ideas it had proclaimed during the period of struggle against the feudal privileges of the aristocracy. Outstanding writers, however, stood side by side with the people in the struggle for freedom for the individual and freedom for the whole of society.

The greatest Czech poet at the turn of the 19th century, and one who opened up new vistas for modern Czech poetry, was JAROSLAV VRCHLICKÝ (1853—1912). His poetry, of which Julius Fučík wrote that "it found the courage to be brilliant and grandiose at the same time", was based in the main on Czech national traditions. In his epic poems, such as *Fragments of an Epopée*, on themes from foreign and Czech history, he expressed his sympathy with the strivings of humanity and paid a tribute to the Hussite period. His *Peasant Ballads* convey both the sufferings and the revolutionary traditions of the Czech country. His love poetry is characterised by great lyrical power and sensitivity. Vrchlický, who was an extremely prolific writer, did much for the formal perfection of the Czech poetic language and to extend the range of themes on which poetry was written, and thus helped to make poetry popular with the people. His many translations have made the greatest works of world poetry, those of Hugo, Dante, Goethe, Mickiewicz, Shelley, Whitman and others, accessible to the Czech reading public.

Further exhibits acquaint the visitor with SVATOPLUK ČECH (1846—1908), whose works are permeated with strong patriotic feeling and understanding of the social aims of the working people. Čech's poem on the theme of individual struggle against oppression, although confiscated, spread rapidly among the people, and his most popular volume of

poems, *Songs of a Slave*, which called for resistance against national and social oppression, found a wide response among the workers. In his epic poems Čech paid homage to the Hussite period and expressed his fervent desire for Slav brotherhood in *Slavia*. Čech's prose satire *Mr Brouček's Excursion into the Fifteenth Century* soon became very popular and has gone through innumerable editions.

The third great poet of the latter half of the 19th century was JOSEF VÁCLAV SLÁDEK (1845—1912), who achieved great purity and conciseness of poetic language, particularly in his verses inspired by Czech country people, *Peasant Songs*, *Czech Sonnets*, and in his poems for children. The poet pilloried the Stoly-pin reaction in Russia after the revolution of 1905 in his poem *On the March*. During his visit to the U. S. A., he became aware of the sad lot of the North American Indians, and his poems *On the Graves of the Red Indians*, as well as his translation of Longfellow's *Song of Hiawatha* inspired the set of drawings, *Elements*, by Mikoláš Aleš. Copies of Sládek's classical translations of Shakespeare's plays are also among the exhibits.

A personal note was struck by the poet and writer JULIUS ZEYER (1841—1901) who, in his epic poems, told of Bohemia's glorious past and often sought his themes abroad, particularly in the East. Despite the exotic subject-matter of many of his poems, Zeyer was a nationally conscious poet with a deep feeling

for Slav unity and with a great love for Russian poetry as witnessed by *The Song of the Avenging of Igor*. The novel, *Jan Maria Plojhar*, voices Zeyer's protest against the defeatism and worldliness of the Czech bourgeoisie.

ALOIS JIRÁSEK (1851—1930), the author of realistic historical novels, traced the popular movement and its democratic ideals closely through Czech history. His works dealing with the Hussite period (*The World against Us*), his works dealing with the struggle of the Czech people against oppression (*The Border Guards*, *The Days of Darkness*), and with the period of the Czech National Awakening are very popular with the people of Czechoslovakia. The exhibits include some of the book-illustrations by Aleš which are, in perfect harmony with the spirit of Jirásek's works. The visitor is also here acquainted with the contribution made by Academician Zdeněk Nejedlý towards ensuring a proper appreciation of Jirásek's significance for Czech literature.

Another room is devoted to the works of several of the realist writers whose themes were drawn from Czech and Moravian country life. In *Forlorn Patriots* KAREL VÁCLAV RAIS (1859—1926) drew a picture of poor Czech teachers and priests who inspired and kept alive a feeling of national consciousness in the people of the remote mountain villages. In other novels again he described the hard life of the cottagers in Czech mountains. JOSEF HOLEČEK (1853—1929),

translator of southern Slav poetry and of the Finnish epic poem *Kalevala*, wrote a sequence of novels, *Our People*, in which he traced the decline of patriarchal relations in the villages of southern Bohemia and the penetration of capitalism into the countryside. The novel *Unto the Third and Fourth Generation* by JAN HERBEN (1857—1936) is the chronicle of a village on the Moravian-Slovak border from the times of Maria Theresia onwards. The novel by the brothers ALOIS and VILÉM MRŠTÍK, *A Year in the Village*, gives a colourful picture of the Moravian village and its life towards the close of the 19th century. In his drama *Maryša* VILÉM MRŠTÍK (1863—1912) showed how the all-powerful influence of money destroys human happiness in a village.

As a further section of the exhibition shows, most of the writers who drew their themes from Czech history took a progressive view of our national past. This is true in particular of the popular writer, VÁCLAV BENEŠ TŘEBÍZSKÝ (1849—1884), who paid tribute to the Hussite Age in his novel *In the Rays of the Chalice*, and in other works described the sufferings of the Czech people during the period following the defeat of the revolt of the nobility in 1620, when Czech people were forcibly reconverted to Catholicism and the Czech Lands impoverished. ZIKMUND WINTER (1846—1912), the author of historical novels and stories, gained renown chiefly by his novel *Master Kampanus*, in which he described the events

that followed shortly upon the Battle of the White Mountain. The history of the Czech Awakening is reflected in *Dražar*, a novel by TEREZA NOVÁKOVÁ (1853—1912). Her other novels deal with the lives of the people in the Czech-Moravian Highlands who sought relief from poverty and misery in religious sectarianism. In *Jiří Šmaldán* she traces the path of one such “seeker after truth” to socialism.

In the nineties of last century, criticism of the bourgeois system by the best writers was usually only the revolt of individuals, and only too often ended in the isolation of the writer.

This was the case with JOSEF SVATOPLUK MACHAR (1864—1942), who in his early works castigated petty bourgeois morals (*Tristium Vindobona, Confiteor*). The prominent critic, F. X. ŠALDA (1867—1937), however, remained in contact with the forces of progress till the end of his life and repeatedly raised his voice against the pseudo-democracy of the capitalist Czechoslovak Republic. The great lyric poet ANTONÍN SOVA (1864—1928), who yearned for a world free of exploitation and oppression (*The Adventure of Courage*), also took a positive view of the revolutionary social movement. OTAKAR BŘEZINA (1868—1929), a master of poetic expression, though he succumbed to mysticism, expressed his longing for brotherhood between nations and the free development of man in his poems *Builders of the Cathedral* and *Hands*.

An important place in Czech literature is occu-

pied by the work of PETR BEZRUČ (born 1867), whose poems were published anonymously in journals and later appeared in a volume entitled *Silesian Songs*. Bezruč spoke in the name of the people of Ostrava and Silesia, who for generations had suffered under the yoke of the national and social oppression. In his own characteristic and realistic language, the poet told of the suffering and courage of the miners, workers and country people, who were being bled white by the coal barons and landowners, and were being forcibly estranged from their nation. Pictures and other documents in the Museum refer to the tremendous response to Bezruč's militant poetry and the setting to music of his poems by Leoš Janáček, the well-known Moravian composer.

A number of outstanding writers who, at the beginning of the 20th century, were critical of the Czech bourgeoisie and inclined towards anarchism are represented in the next room. They include FRÁŇA ŠRÁMEK (1877—1952) whose earliest volume of verse *Oh, Misery of Life, I Love You Yet* was a sharp criticism of society. Šrámek is here represented by his most mature poetic work *The Weir*. His novel *Silver Wind* had a strong influence on his generation. KAREL TOMAN (1877—1946), a poet of outstanding purity and delicacy of expression, achieved real mastery in his volumes of poems *Sunny Hours*, *The Months*, etc. The Museum further recalls the works of VIKTOR DYK (1877—1931), a satirical poet, who

also wrote poems strongly patriotic in sentiment, the pointedly anti-bourgeois poems and cartoons by FRANTIŠEK GELLNER (1881—1914), and poems by JIŘÍ MAHEN (1882—1939), who was one of the prominent writers of his generation and whose finest work is *Jánošík*, a book about the Slovak folk hero.

A special room in the Museum is devoted to the influence of the Russian classics on Czech cultural life. Here we find the first translation of Pushkin's *Gipsies* in a newspaper from the year 1831, translations of works by Lermontov, Gogol, Nekrasov, Saltykov-Shchedrin, Ostrovsky, Turgeniev, Goncharov, L. N. Tolstoy and so on up to Maxim Gorky. Interest in Russian realistic literature grew so rapidly that in the nineties Otto's publishing firm launched a "Russian Library". Russian classics were here published in good translations and attractive lay-out.

The last room—the former summer refectory with its frescos and stucco decorations—is devoted to the work of the prominent representatives of Czech literature in the period between the two world wars. The path of Czech literature towards present-day socialist realism can be traced through the work of these writers.

The room is dominated by the sculpture *Brotherhood* by Karel Pokorný, symbolising the friendship of the Czechoslovak and Soviet peoples. Show-cases in the centre of this room contain exhibits relating

to the influence of the Great October Socialist Revolution on Czech literature. A number of poems and other works dedicated by Czech poets to V. I. Lenin and J. V. Stalin, as well as data concerning the activities of Czech writers during the anti-fascist struggle and works inspired by the liberation of Czechoslovakia in 1945 by the Soviet Army are on view here.

In the bays are exhibits illustrating the work and mission of notable Czech authors of this period. The work of STANISLAV KOSTKA NEUMANN (1875—1947), who was the greatest Czech socialist poet, is traced from its individualistic beginnings, through poetry glorifying life and nature (*The Book of Forests, Waters and Hills*), and praising technical progress and modern civilisation (*New Songs*), right up to the first consciously revolutionary volume, *Red Songs* (1922). *Love* and *The Sonata of Horizontal Life* are collections of Neumann's intimate and social poetry from the thirties. These mature and beautifully balanced poems which are based on a materialist world-outlook, express the poet's comradeship with the working people of the world and his contempt for oppression and everything that cripples life. The polemic *Anti-Gide* was written as an answer to a slanderous attack by André Gide on the Soviet Union and is an example of Neumann's extensive activities as a publicist. Copies of the journals edited by Neumann further illustrate this aspect of his work

and include: *New Cult*, *June* and *Proletkult*. In his last poems, written in liberated Czechoslovakia, S. K. Neumann hailed the advent of a new and glorious epoch in the life of his country.

One of the most talented Czech socialist poets was JIŘÍ WOLKER (1900—24), whose premature death was a great loss to Czech literature. He was loved by his contemporaries and particularly by the youth of following generations. In his volume of verses called *The Weary Hour*, in his ballads published posthumously, in his prose writings and newspaper articles, the poet expressed not only his solidarity with the revolutionary working class but also his firm faith in the victory of their struggle. Wolker's ballads show particularly clearly how closely he was linked with the best traditions of Czech national poetry.

The first Czech prose writer to give us a socialist novel was IVAN OLBRACHT (1882—1952). Its title is *Proletarian Anna* and the struggle of the working class in Czechoslovakia in 1920 is its theme. Among Olbracht's varied and masterly writings, his books about the Trans-Carpathian Ukraine are worthy of special note. (*Golet in the Valley, Mountains and Centuries*). His best known work which shows Olbracht's love for the poor but proud people of that country is *Nikola Shuhai*, the story of an outlaw who sought to obtain justice by individual revolt against society.

Next we come to the exhibition of the works of MARIE MAJEROVÁ (born 1882) who, in her books

written shortly after the First World War (*The Most Beautiful World*), took the side of the revolutionary masses. *The Siren* (1936), a novel which chronicles the life of industrial Kladno and the struggles of the miners and foundry workers against their exploiters, is her crowning achievement. The Museum also shows shots from the film version of this great work. The exhibition of Majerová's work concludes with her latest poems and stories about life in present-day Czechoslovakia and her travel notes from the Soviet Union and People's China.

Modern Czech poetry is represented by VÍTĚZSLAV NEZVAL (born 1900) whose development as a poet has been a complicated one. His numerous works, however, are characterised by optimism and consciousness of the historical mission of the working class. His *Songs of the Night* include the best of his early poetry (*Edison, The Wonderful Magician*), while *Historic Canvas* is outstanding among his poetic works written shortly before the Second World War. As a poet true to the party of the revolutionary proletariat, he entered a new period of poetic creation after the liberation of his homeland in 1945, when he began to pour forth his feelings in poem after poem. The poem dedicated to J. V. Stalin, his verses filled with deep love for his native Moravia and its people, *From Home*, and the volume entitled *Wings*, are among Nezval's best achievements in the field of poetry. The culmination of his post-war poetry is *The Song of*

Peace, which is an expression of the poet's firm faith in the strength of the international peace movement. In 1953 Nezval was awarded the International Peace Prize.

Another exhibition recalls the work of the brilliant Czech satirist, JAROSLAV HAŠEK (1883—1923), author of many short stories and of the novel *The Good Soldier Schweik*, a satire on the imperialist war which is known all the world over. Hašek's activities as an anarchist and rebel before the First World War and his mature, revolutionary work in the Red Army after the October Revolution are also documented here.

The work of KAREL ČAPEK (1890—1938) is represented in another part of the exhibition by books such as *Letters from England*, *Letters from Holland*, etc. These, as well as a book of feuilletons, *How They Do It*, provide proof of Čapek's acute powers of observation and faculty of seeing ordinary things in a new and amusing way. Čapek's humanist and anti-imperialist views found expression in his *R. U. R.* and *Krakatit*, both of which are well known at home and abroad. Of particular importance among Čapek's later novels is *The First Rescue Party*, in which he paid tribute to the comradeship and heroism of the miners whose idiom he captured marvellously. *War with the Newts*, *Power and Glory* and *The Mother* are also recalled here, as are Čapek's warnings made in 1938 when Czechoslovakia was in mortal danger. Yet Čapek, whose death was hastened by a reaction-

ary slander campaign, never ceased to believe in the final victory of Czechoslovakia's just struggle. Illustrations by his brother Josef, who died in a Nazi concentration camp, call to mind Karel Čapek's delightful children's books. Copies of translations of Čapek's books into a number of foreign languages indicate the popularity they rightly enjoy.

JOSEF HORA (1891—1945), a master of Czech verse, is represented in the Museum mainly by his books of social poetry which he wrote in the twenties as one of the first Czech proletarian poets, namely *The Working Day*, *The Stormy Spring*, *The Heart and the Tumult of the World*. Hora's love for his native country and his anxiety for its fate are clearly expressed in his war-time volumes of poems *Homeland*, *Jan the Violinist* and others. An excellent translation of Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin* calls to mind his work as a translator of Russian classical poetry. The novels *Socialist Hope* and *The Year of Hunger* show Josef Hora as one of the founders of the Czech socialist novel.

A place of honour among Czech writers rightfully belongs to VLADISLAV VANČURA (1891—1942), an anti-fascist fighter who fell a victim to Nazi terror. His novel *Jan Marhoul the Baker* tells in a highly poetic way of the fate of a simple, guileless man who succumbed in his fight for bread to a world dominated by merciless capital. *Fertile Fields and Battlefields* exposes the horror and absurdity of wars of conquest, and *Markéta Lazarová*, a tale of a family of

medieval robbers, is a splendid example of Vančura's great art of story-telling and of his mastery of words. His last, unfinished work is *Pictures from the History of the Czech Nation* (1940), in which in effective, pure and highly poetic language he traced the development of the Czech State in accordance with the modern scientific conception of history.

Another victim of Nazi terror was the pioneer and founder of Czech socialist criticism, BEDŘICH VÁCLAVEK (1897—1943), who, in his book *Through Creation to Reality* and in his *Survey of Czech 20th-century Literature*, made an attempt to formulate concretely the creative methods of socialist realism. His activities both as a scholar and publicist in the field of Czech folk song are represented in the Museum by one of his latest collections.

MARIE PUJMANOVÁ (born 1893) completes the number of these outstanding writers. In her pre-war novels, together with S. K. Neumann, Ivan Olbracht and Marie Majerová, she blazed the trail to socialist realism, to the truthful presentation of reality in its revolutionary historical development. The most outstanding of the works she has written so far is her trilogy *People at the Crossroads*, *Playing with Fire* and *Life against Death*. The first volume, which appeared shortly before the Second World War, shows the life of workers and progressive intelligentsia in pre-war Czechoslovakia and exposes the brutality of modern capitalist forms of exploitation and the en-

slavement of the workers. The other two volumes, which appeared after 1945, give us a picture of the anti-fascist struggle of the Czechoslovak people up to the year 1945. The second volume deals with Dimitrov's courageous stand before the Leipzig court of law, and the third concludes with the rising of Prague and the liberation of Czechoslovakia by the victorious Soviet Army. Pujmanová has fully succeeded in showing in both books how people's heroes are made. Her volumes of verse, for instance, *A Million Doves*, the theme of which is peace, take their place beside her prose work.

Facing each other are exhibitions of the works of Julius Fučík and Zdeněk Nejedlý with the busts of both men. The Museum gives but an outline of the life and work of the heroic fighter against fascism and for the victory of the revolution, JULIUS FUČÍK (1903—1943), whose *Report from the Gallows* has been translated into more languages than any other Czech book (68 by 1955). The exhibition also touches on Fučík's work as a journalist and literary critic. It was Fučík's revealing view of the development of Czech literature that contributed to the full appreciation of the works of Neruda and Němcová, and pointed out the significance of the works of Sabina, Zeyer and a number of others. Writings on Fučík's life show the place he occupies in world culture (poems by Pablo Neruda and Boris Licharev, a play by J. Buryakovsky, etc.).

Still more difficult has it been to do justice to the extensive work of ZDENĚK NEJEDLÝ (b. 1878) in such a small space. However, the exhibition captures the main traits of his many-sided activities, and their formative influence on Czech literature. Nejedlý has always looked upon the democratic traditions of Czech history and culture as a living force and an important aid in our fight for a better future. The exhibits have been selected so as to stress Nejedlý's work as the historian of our national culture, a militant publicist, an anti-fascist fighter and a pioneer of friendship with the Soviet people. Books on the history of the *Hussite songs*, a study on *Zdeněk Fibich*, many volumes on *Bedřich Smetana*, a biography of *V. I. Lenin* and a *History of the Opera of the National Theatre*, as well as studies in Czech literature (on Jirásek, Němcová, etc.) and historical works, right up to his last, as yet unfinished work, *A History of the Czech Nation*, are on view here. It must be pointed out that Nejedlý never gives the impression of being a narrow specialist, but always presents a broad picture of the national and social life of the time, above all of the Hussite Age and of the National Awakening. Of Zdeněk Nejedlý's activities as a publicist, perhaps the most interesting document is the journal *Var* (Ferment), which he started to edit in the twenties. The journal strongly influenced the progressive sections of the Czech intelligentsia for it taught them to appreciate the significance of

the Soviet Union and to combat the reactionary elements which ever and again reared their heads in the pre-Munich Czechoslovak Republic.



We leave the Strahov Museum where; we have followed the long cultural tradition of a nation which has drawn inspiration and instruction for its life of today from its rich history. For a while, as we pause on the terraces of the Strahov gardens which slope gently down towards the old houses of the Malá Strana, the eye is refreshed by the sight of the green trees and comes to rest on the Prague Castle and the sea of roofs and spires below. The silver ribbon of the Vltava, spanned by bridges, gleams as it winds its way through the city. No better place could possibly have been chosen for a Museum of Czech Literature and Culture. But Strahov is not only a museum and library. It is also the scene of concerts and dramatic performances, particularly in summer, when Prague's gardens seem to call to the people to come and enjoy music and poetry among the beauties of nature. Concerts of works by Czech masters of the 17th and 18th centuries, the forerunners of Mozart, are a regular feature at Strahov as well as evenings of readings from the works of great poets, both native and foreign. In 1954 a cycle of evenings devoted to Shakespeare was held there.

Work has not yet ended on the Museum of Czech

Literature and on the Library at Strahov. There is great activity in the old buildings, due not only to the streams of visitors, but also to the work on plans to perfect the Museum and to complete the library and the archives. Excavation work is also being continued.

The Museum of Czech Literature is, however, already a proof of the value placed by the Czechoslovak people and their Government on the cultural legacy of their national past. Their starting point is the past, but the correct interpretation of this legacy points the way towards the future, towards a further development of the forces of the people in a free Czechoslovakia.

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